

White Pass School District No. 303

September 16, 2013

Marlene H. Dortch
Secretary
Federal Communications Commission
445 12th Street SW
Washington, DC 20554

Re: Modernizing the E-Rate Program for Schools and Libraries, WC Docket 13-184

Dear Ms. Dortch,

White Pass School District No. 303 is a small rural public school district in southwestern Washington. Our district serves a student population of 400 Pre-K – 12th grade with greater than 50% of those students qualifying for the free/reduced lunch program. We are in a Timber community and have a large number of homeless and poor. School is one of the only places that most of these students have access to the Internet. Fortunately we have the support from our voters and have continued to pass Maintenance and Operations Levies over the years as well as a Building Bond to modernize our Elementary and High School.

As we continue to receive support from our community, through Levy dollars, we have started a one-to-one initiative with tablet devices. Our goal is to have a tablet in the hands of every student by the spring of 2016. While our internal network is ready to support the number of devices we are adding, our challenge is with broadband connectivity. New technologies are not readily available in our rural area. We still rely on a phone system that must be connected to analog lines as our service provider is not able to provide a PRI, nor are the able to connect us to fiber. These limitations prevent us from using enhanced 911 to push information to emergency services. As we add tablet devices over the next 3 years, the need for broadband will only increase. Erate will be more important than ever for small districts like ours. The costs for these services are huge for small districts to absorb and without Erate, we could never provide the level of connectivity students need in today's digital world. A new modernized erate program, designed to streamline and provide easier access to filing for and receiving services would be greatly appreciated.

This letter offers comments related to the FCC's effort to modernize the E-rate program.

We believe:

- Universal access to broadband is necessary to meet school reform and improvement goals. These goals include the development of K-12 programming able to prepare all students for college and 21st century careers.

- The demand for access to broadband is growing rapidly beyond the ability of schools to provide it, despite the cost advantage possible through the E-rate discount.
- A modernized E-rate program must be less burdensome for schools, and aligned more effectively to current and future K-12 education priorities. There is also a growing need to help schools plan and budget for technology.

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- Today's demand for the cost benefit of the E-rate program exceeds available funding. Clearly, the amount of money available for schools must increase to meet state and local needs.

We agree that it is time to modernize the E-rate program and support positive change that benefits K-12 schools. We encourage you to move quickly as you complete your deliberations.

If you have any further questions about our district, please do not hesitate to contact me at sloucks@whitepass.k12.wa.us

Sincerely,

Shane Loucks
Tech Coordinator